reach the Year 2000. Do you think that computer mistakes due to the Year-2000 issue will cause major problems, minor problems, or no problems at all?

1 Major problems
2 Minor problems
3 No problems at all
4 No opinion

2. Do you think that computer mistakes due to the Year-2000 issue will cause major problems, minor problems or no problems at all for you personally?

1 Major problems
2 Minor problems
3 No problems at all
4 No opinion

3. How much have you seen or heard about the Year 2000 computer bug problem, sometimes called the Millennium Bug or the Y–2-K bug, before now—a great deal, some, not much, or nothing at all?

1 A great deal
2 Some
3 Not much
4 Nothing at all
5 No opinion

The rest of the questions on this survey will deal with Year 2000 computer issue. For convenience we will refer to it throughout the survey as the ''Y2K'' computer bug.

4. To the extent Y2K computer problems occur, how long do you think they will last—[FORM A: READ 1–4; FORM B: READ 4–1]?

1 For only a few days around January 1, 2000
2 For several weeks (or)
3 For several months to a year (or)
4 For more than a year
5 No opinion

6. For each of the following, please say whether that is something you probably will or will not do in order to protect yourself against problems associated with the Y2K computer bug. How about... [RANDOM ORDER]

1 Yes
2 No
3 No opinion

a. Obtain special confirmation or documentation of your bank account balances, retirement funds, or other financial records
b. Stockpile food and water
c. Buy a generator or wood stove
d. Withdraw all your money from the bank
e. Withdraw and set aside a large amount of cash
f. Avoid travelling on airplanes on or around January 1, 2000

9. Next I'm going to read some specific problems. As I read each one, please say whether you think it likely or unlikely to occur as a result of Y2K. First, . . . Next, . . .:

1 Likely
2 Unlikely
3 No opinion

a. Air traffic control systems will fail, putting air travel in jeopardy
b. Banking and accounting systems will fail, possibly causing errors in employee paychecks, government payments, and other automated financial transactions
c. Food and retail distribution systems will fail, possibly causing grocery and other store shortages
e. Hospital equipment and services will fail, putting patients at risk
h. Nuclear power or defense systems could fail, causing a major accident

10. As you may know, efforts are currently underway throughout the country to upgrade computer systems in order to correct the Y2K computer problem. We'd like to know whether you are generally confident or NOT confident that each of the following levels of government and business will have upgraded their computer systems before any Y2K problems can occur. How about... [RANDOM ORDER]

1 Yes, confident they will have upgraded
2 No, not confident
3 No opinion

a. The U.S. government, including all federal offices and agencies
b. Your state government
c. Your local government
d. U.S. corporations and large businesses
e. Small U.S. businesses
f. Foreign governments of other developed and industrialized countries
g. Foreign governments of Third World and other less developed countries

[FR Doc. 99–5785 Filed 3–8–99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. STN 50–454]

Commonwealth Edison Company (Byron Station, Unit No. 1); Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations for Facility Operating License No. NPF–37, issued to Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd, the licensee), for operation of Byron Station, Unit 1, located in Ogle County, Illinois.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of Proposed Action

The proposed action would exempt ComEd from the requirements of 10 CFR 70.24, which require a monitoring system that will energize clear audible alarms if accidental criticality occurs in each area in which special nuclear material is handled, used, or stored. The proposed action would also exempt the licensee from the requirements to maintain emergency procedures for each area in which this licensed special nuclear material is handled, used, or stored to ensure that all personnel withdraw to an area of safety upon the sounding of the alarm, to familiarize personnel with the evacuation plan, and to designate responsible individuals for determining the cause of the alarm, and to place radiation survey instruments in accessible location for use in such an emergency.

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application for exemption dated October 16, 1997.

The Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of 10 CFR 70.24 is to ensure that if a criticality were to occur during the handling of special nuclear material, personnel would be alerted to that fact and would take appropriate action. At a commercial nuclear power plant, the inadvertent criticality with which 10 CFR 70.24 is concerned could occur during fuel handing operations. The special nuclear material that could be assembled into a critical mass at a commercial nuclear power plant is in the form of nuclear fuel; the quantity of other forms of special nuclear material that is stored on site in a given location is small enough to preclude achieving a critical mass. Because the fuel is not enriched beyond 5.0 weight percent Uranium-235 and because commercial nuclear plant licensees have procedures and design features that prevent inadvertent criticality, the staff has determined that it is unlikely that an inadvertent criticality could occur due to the handling of special nuclear material at a commercial power reactor. The requirements of 10 CFR 70.24, therefore, are not necessary to ensure the safety of personnel during the handling of special nuclear materials at commercial power reactors.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed actions and concludes that there is no significant environmental impact to Byron. Inadvertent or accidental criticality will be precluded through compliance with

the Byron Station Technical Specifications (TSs), the design of the fuel storage racks providing geometric spacing of fuel assemblies in their storage locations, and administrative controls imposed on fuel handling procedures. TSs requirements specify reactivity limits for the fuel storage racks and minimum spacing between the fuel assemblies in the storage racks.

Appendix A of 10 CFR Part 50, ''General Design Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants,'' (GDC) Criterion 62, requires that criticality in the fuel storage and handling system shall be prevented by physical systems or processes, preferably by use of geometrically-safe configurations. This is met at Byron Station, as identified in the Updated Final Safety Analysis Report (UFSAR). Byron Station UFSAR Section 9.1.1.1, New Fuel Storage—Design Basis, states that, ''* * * the new fuel storage racks are designed such that the effective multiplication factor does not exceed 0.95 with fuel of a maximum enrichment of 5.00 wt% u-235 in place, assuming the stored assemblies are completely submerged in unborated water at a conservative water temperature and with no credit for neutron poison in the fuel assembly.'' NUREG–0876, ''Safety Evaluation Report Related to the Operation of Byron Station, Units 1 and 2,'' dated February 1982, determined that the design of the Byron new fuel storage racks satisfied the requirements of GDC 62.

The proposed exemption would not result in any significant radiological impacts. The proposed exemption would not affect radiological plant effluents nor cause any significant occupational exposures since the TSs, design controls (including geometric spacing of fuel assembly storage spaces), and administrative controls preclude inadvertent criticality. The amount of radioactive waste would not be changed by the proposed exemption.

The proposed exemption does not result in any significant nonradiological environmental impacts. The proposed exemption involves features located entirely within the restricted area as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect non-radiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant non-radiological environmental impacts associated the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded that there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. As an alternative to the proposed exemption, the staff considered denial of the requested exemption. Denial of the request would result in no change in current environmental impacts. The environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternative are similar.

Alternative Use of Resources

The action does not involve the use of any resources not previously considered in the ''Final Environmental Statement Related to the Operation of Byron Station, Units 1 and 2'' dated April 1982.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on February 24, 1999, the staff consulted with the Illinois State official, Mr. Frank Niziolek, Head, Reactor Safety Section, Division of Engineering, Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated October 16, 1997, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, which is located at the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, D.C., and at the local public document room located at the Byron Public Library District, 109 N. Franklin, P.O. Box 434, Byron, Illinois 61010.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of March 1999.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Stuart A. Richards,

Director, Project Directorate III–2, Division of Licensing Project Management Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 99–5749 Filed 3–8–99; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

DATE: Weeks of March 8, 15, 22, and 29, 1999.

PLACE: Commissioners' Conference Room, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

STATUS: Public and closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Week of March 8

Wednesday, March 10

11:00 a.m. Affirmation Session (Public Meeting)
a: North Atlantic Energy Service Corp., et al. (Seabrook Station Unit 1) Docket No. 40–443, Draft Commission Memorandum and Order Addressing Intervention Petitions and Hearing Requests of New England Power Company (NEPCO) and United Illuminating Co. (tentative)

Week of March 15—Tentative

Tuesday, March 16

1:00 p.m. Briefing on Status of DOE High Level Waste Viability Assessment (Public Meeting) (Contact: Mike Bell, 301–415–7252)

Wednesday, March 17

9:00 a.m. Meeting with Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste and Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Public Meeting) (Contact: John Larkins, 301–415–7360)
11:30 a.m. Affirmation Session (Public Meeting) (If needed)
1:30 p.m. Briefing on Part 40 Decommissioning Issues (Public Meeting) (Contact: Seymour Weiss, 301–415–2170)

Thursday, March 18

10:00 a.m. Briefing on Safeguards Performance Assessment and Design Basis Threat (Closed—ex. 1)
2:00 p.m. Briefing by Executive Branch (Closed—ex. 1)

Friday, March 19

9:00 a.m. Briefing on Status of External Regulation of DOE Facilities (Public Meeting) (Contact: Charlie Haughney, 301–415–7198)

Week of March 22—Tentative

Thursday, March 25

1:00 p.m. Briefing on Part 35 Rulemaking (Public Meeting) (Contact: Patricia Holahan, 301–415–8125)

Friday, March 26

9:00 a.m. Briefing on Proposed Reactor Oversight Process Improvements & Enforcement (Public Meeting) (Contact: William Dean, 301–415–2240)